**Killing of Elephants**

1654. PROF. K. V. THOMAS: Will the minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the unscrupulous killing of elephants for their Ivory tusks and teeth in the different parts of the country; and

(b) if so, action being taken to protect the elephants?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Sporadic cases of unscrupulous killing of elephants by poachers for their tusks in different parts of the country have come to the notice of the Government of India.

(b) Action being taken to protect the elephant population include:—

(i) Indian Elephant is included in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Therefore, there is a total ban on hunting of this species and trade in Indian Ivory products. International trade in Indian Ivory is also totally banned.

(ii) Government of India has provided assistance to the States for strengthening of their anti-poaching infrastructure under the "Centrally Sponsored Scheme Control of Poaching and Illegal Trade in Wildlife. An amount of Rs. 1 crore was provided as assistance under the scheme during the VII Five Year Plan. During 1990-91, an amount of Rs. 18.58 lakhs was sanctioned. The allocation for the year 1991-92 is Rs. 75 lakhs.

(iii) A scheme of "Project Elephant" is included in the VIII Five Year Plan. The scheme envisage as below:

(a) improvement of the habitat by way of control of grazing, plantation of suitable species for fodder and relocation of population outside the national parks and sanctuaries.

(b) restoring migration corridors for elephants.

(c) erecting electric fences along the borders of the forests to safeguard against human-elephant conflicts.

(d) proper compensation for damage to life and property caused by elephants.

(e) strengthening the anti-poaching infrastructure in States. The tentative budget allocation for the "Project Elephant" during the financial year 1991-92 is Rs. 2.5 crores.

(iv) Whenever necessary, help of police and civil administration is also taken to apprenhend the poachers.

**Constitution of Medical Education Commission**

1655. PROF. K. V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under the consideration of the Union Government to constitute a Medical Education Commission; and

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the proposed commission?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARADEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.